



The Invaders: One of 'them' gets the drop on series hero Roy Thinnes.

IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

This Is the Week of Wholesale Program Switches.
Here's a Preview of What's New

BY LESLIE RADDATZ

For one network it's "The Second Season"—let's whoop it up for all these great new shows that are even greater than all those great new shows that we whooped it up for in September! For the other networks it's winter changeover time—let's face it, gang, some of those great new shows we introduced in September are clink-

ers, and we'd better send in the second team!

For the viewer it's a time to take a closer look at those program listings, because 17 of the season's prime-time shows either are departing or are shifting to new time periods. And 12 new (or revived) series are moving into the nighttime schedule.

In short, the networks are performing the annual Rites of Winter—shaking things up in hopes of improving their shows' ratings. The biggest shakers are the jittery folks at ABC, home of "The Second Season," who are dumping six shows, switching five others into new time slots and bringing on five newcomers, in an attempt to avert a third-place finish in the ratings race. (At the same time, ABC is expanding its early-evening *Peter Jennings with the News* strip from 15 minutes to 30.) CBS, meanwhile, is making four changes, and NBC two. Most of the shuffling takes place this week.

You might call it "The Second Season of the Hapless Heroes." Of the 12 new entries, four—*Captain Nice*, *Mr. Terrific*, *Rango* and *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*—feature the sort of inept, bumbling comic figures who are today's TV darlings. The hero of a fifth, *The Invaders*, is a more apt type who blunders into all kinds of jams trying to convince people that he really saw a flying saucer land and that its occupants are out to take over the earth. (Of course, you and he know that he is telling the truth.)

Aside from the hapless heroes, the midterm replacements include a new night of movies, a series of spectacles, three daytime game shows that now will be seen in the evening, too, and two returns—*The Avengers*, the British series which enjoyed a good run last year, and that old faithful of television's early glory, *Dragnet*.

The changeover, which was dictated by ratings, is governed by economics. The networks hope that the ratings will be higher. But whether they are or not, in the Second Season, with fewer big names and more low-budget formats, the prices will obviously be lower.

All most viewers really care about, of course, is: Will programs be better? That's a question they'll have to answer themselves. But here's what they'll have to work with.

THE WEEKEND: On Saturday, ABC has moved *The Dating Game* and *The Newlywed Game* into the hour vacated by *Shane*. Both are low-budget graduates of daytime TV, dedicated to the proposition that when it's packaged properly, love conquers *Flipper* and Jackie Gleason (the chief competition on the other networks). Both feature beamish emcees, some mildly *double-entendre* questions and answers, and prizes which are grander to suit the new nighttime status. **continued**

The Avengers: Diana Rigg returns as the comely and deadly Mrs. Emma Peel.



Midseason Preview/continued

On Sunday, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, which replaces Garry Moore on CBS, bears no resemblance to last season's *Smothers Brothers Show*, a situation comedy which left brother Tom with an ulcer. This one is a musical-variety hour in which the brothers, inarticulate Tom and prissy Dick, work with the various acts on the bill—"in the tradition of the Jackie Gleason and Red Skelton shows," say the producers hopefully.

MONDAY: Two of the new hapless-hero programs, *Mr. Terrific* and *Captain Nice*, are almost identical and, to compound the resemblance, play back to back Monday nights on CBS and NBC. Both are spoofs of "Superman." *Mr. Terrific*, replacing *Run, Buddy, Run* (another bumbler) on CBS, is the story of an innocuous young man with freckles, played by

Steve Strimpell, who becomes all-powerful when he takes a certain mysterious pill. *Captain Nice*, replacing Roger Miller on NBC, is the story of an innocuous young man with glasses, played by William Daniels, who becomes all-powerful when he swallows a certain mysterious potion.

There are differences, though. Mr. Terrific wears a silvery jacket and flaps his arms when he flies. Captain Nice wears a blue cape and does not flap his arms. Captain Nice has a mother, played by Alice Ghostley. Mr. Terrific has John McGiver, the government bigwig who gives him the pills that enable him to Fight Evil. Mr. Terrific has a roommate, played by Dick Gautier (are you remembering all these names?), who is very big with the girls. Captain Nice has a nice friend, played by Ann Prentiss. He is scared to death of her.

The remaining Monday night entry is the perennial *To Tell the Truth*,



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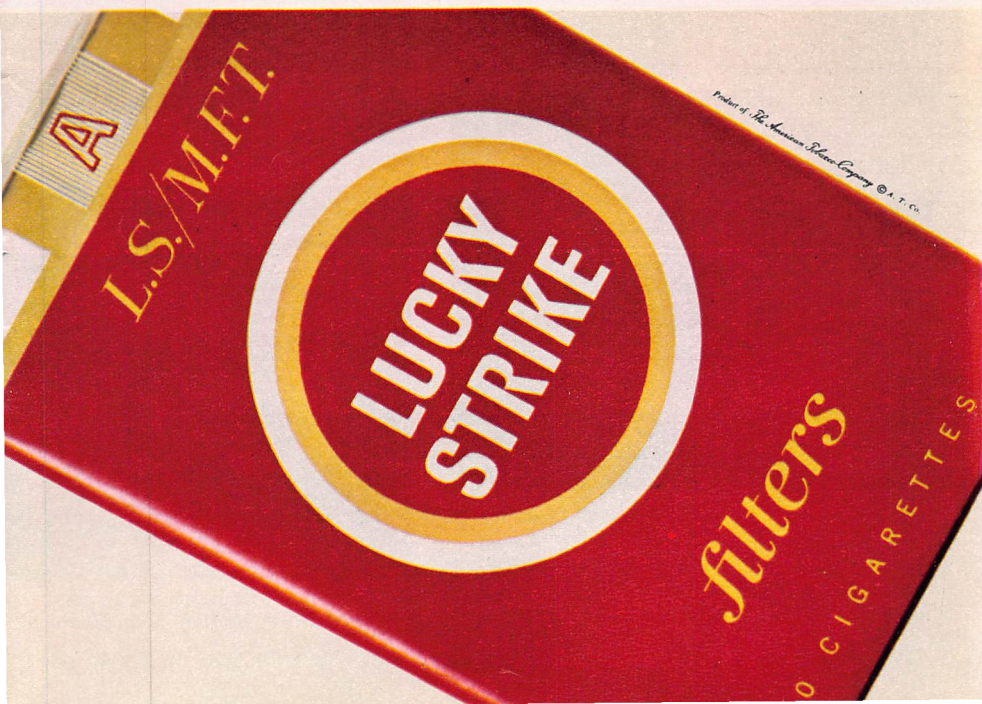
which has gone in for *The Jean Arthur Show* on CBS.

TUESDAY: *The Invaders* replaces ABC's *The Rounders* (canceled) and *The Pruitts of Southampton* (moved to Friday and renamed *The Phyllis Diller Show*). It stars Roy Thinnes of last season's *The Long Hot Summer*. He is the aforementioned young man who sees the flying saucer and is unable to convince anyone that the whole world is threatened. The program has much of the cliff-hanger quality of *The Fugitive*, which is not surprising, since both are produced by Quinn Martin.

WEDNESDAY: Movies are better than ever, especially on television. After the resounding triumph of "The Bridge on the River Kwai," ABC was quick to schedule another movie night, which means that one or another of the networks now has a feature picture

on the air every night except Monday. There isn't another "River Kwai" on the ABC Wednesday schedule, but you will be seeing, among others, "Flaming Star" (Elvis Presley), "It's Only Money" (Jerry Lewis), "Murder, Inc." (Stuart Whitman, May Britt), "Sodom and Gomorrah" (Stewart Granger), "Take Her, She's Mine" (James Stewart, Sandra Dee), "Ulysses" (Kirk Douglas), "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea" (Walter Pidgeon, Joan Fontaine), "Wild in the Country" (Elvis Presley) and, as a three-hour "special" Feb. 8, "Guys and Dolls" (Frank Sinatra, Marlon Brando).

THURSDAY: As previously noted, *Dragnet* is back, replacing *The Hero* on NBC—the same network and the same night of the week it reigned supreme for so many years. This time around Sgt. Joe Friday has a new sidekick—an older, tired type named Bill Gannon, played by **continued**



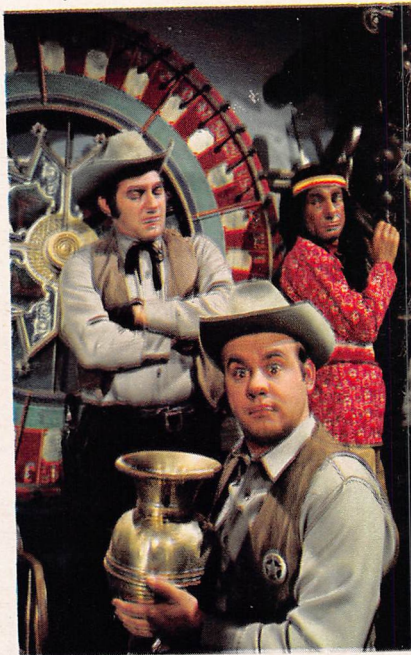
CENTRAL ANALY



Dragnet: This is a newly filmed edition of an old favorite. Jack Webb (right), who still just wants the facts, ma'am, has a new partner, Harry Morgan.



Mr. Terrific: Steve Strimpell is the silver-plated, arm-flapping superhero.



Rango: Tim Conway stars with Norman Alden, 'Indian' Guy Marks.

Harry Morgan, who was Dennis Weaver's side-kick in the short-lived *Kentucky Jones* series, was Pete Porter in *December Bride* and *Pete and Gladys*, and was all sorts of people in Richard Boone's repertory series. The programs are still based on actual cases from the files of the Los Angeles Police Department. Only Jack Webb has changed—about 10 years' worth.

Also on Thursday, *Jericho* comes tumbling out of CBS's lineup, to be supplanted by *Coliseum*, a weekly series of musicals, ice shows, rodeos, circuses, water shows and other varieties of hurly-burly.

FRIDAY: *Rango* replaces the first half hour of *The Milton Berle Show* on ABC (Phyllis Diller's show fills the second). It stars Tim Conway, late of *McHale's Navy*, and details the adventures of that ever-popular TV figure, the hapless hero, in the Old West. Conway is a Texas Ranger called Rango—no one seems quite sure whether that is his first name, last name or nickname. He and a faithful redskin named Pink Cloud (Guy Marks) stumble through frontier adventures which are otherwise played perfectly straight, particularly by the Ranger Captain (Norman Alden). Conway said the new show is not as hokey as *McHale's Navy*, but as he was saying this, he was being covered from head to foot with flour, and a bale of hay was about to fall on him.

Bringing the Second Season's week to a close is *The Avengers*, going in for 12 O'clock High on ABC. Patrick Macnee is back again as the proper John Steed, and Diana Rigg as the ultramod Mrs. Emma Peel—only now you will be able to see her black boots and black leather coat in color.

So there's "The Second Season." The networks have not said whether there will be a third before the reruns begin in the spring.



Captain Nice: Another milksop is transformed into a wondrously mighty Scourge of Evil, albeit a somewhat tacky one. Bill Daniels plays the role.